

claim 26 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Ito in view of U.S. Patent Application Publication No. 2003/0082421 (Yonetsu). These rejections are respectfully traversed.

Applicants previously submitted a verified English translation of JP 2002-280317 (JP 317)<sup>2</sup>, to which the present application claims priority. JP 317 supports the subject matter recited in the claims, and was filed in the Japanese Patent Office on September 26, 2002, which predates the January 27, 2003 filing date of Ito and the August 29, 2003 publication date of JP 2002-35247, to which Ito claims priority. Therefore, Ito does not qualify as prior art.

Thus, claim 1 is patentable. Claims 5, 24 and 26 depending therefrom are patentable for at least their dependency, as well as for the additional features they recite.

Accordingly, Applicants respectfully request withdrawal of the rejection.

### **III. Conclusion**

In view of the foregoing, it is respectfully submitted that this application is in condition for allowance. Favorable reconsideration and prompt allowance of the claims are earnestly solicited.

---

<sup>2</sup> See Applicant's submission on, for example, the February 25, 2010 Request for Reconsideration.

Should the Examiner believe that anything further would be desirable in order to place this application in even better condition for allowance, the Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned at the telephone number set forth below.

Respectfully submitted,



James A. Oliff  
Registration No. 27,075

Ee Ming T. Yap  
Registration No. 65,347

JAO:ETY/rle

Date: April 26, 2011

**OLIFF & BERRIDGE, PLC**  
**P.O. Box 320850**  
**Alexandria, Virginia 22320-4850**  
**Telephone: (703) 836-6400**

**DEPOSIT ACCOUNT USE  
AUTHORIZATION**

Please grant any extension  
necessary for entry of this filing;  
Charge any fee due to our  
Deposit Account No. 15-0461